

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12 IO-13  
OMB-01 TRSE-00 /096 W  
-----089811 111623Z /41

O 111539Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4859

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DAKAR 5266

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MR, SG

SUBJECT: REACTION IN SENEGAL TO COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA

REF: STATE 173958

1. REACTION IN SENEGAL TO COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA IS  
ONE OF GREAT CONCERN AND INTENSE INTEREST, BUT ESSENTIALLY  
"WAIT AND SEE."

2. WE HAVE REPORTS THAT GOS AND PRESIDENT SENGHOR WERE  
AT FIRST IN HIGH STATE OF AGITATION WHEN THEY HEARD NEWS  
EARLY YESTERDAY MORNING OF OULD DADDAH'S OVERTHROW IN  
NOUAKCHOTT. GOS UNDERTOOK QUICKLY TO INFORM MME. MARIAM  
OULD DADDAH WHO WAS ATTENDING OPENING MEETING OF INTER-  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN JURISTS AT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
BUILDING IN DAKAR. MME. OULD DADDAH REPORTEDLY LEFT  
DAKAR FOR NOUAKCHOTT OVERLAND YESTERDAY AFTERNOON.  
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3. MAIN CONCERN OF SENEGALESE WAS AND IS POLITICAL  
ORIENTATION OF NEW MILITARY LEADERS. AT FIRST WE HEARD  
REITERATION FROM SOME GOS OFFICIALS OF PRESIDENT  
SENGHOR'S PREVIOUS WARNINGS THAT SENEGAL COULD NOT BE  
INDIFFERENT TO ANY RADICAL INTERNAL CHANGE INSIDE  
MAURITANIA BECAUSE OF SENEGAL'S HISTORY AND ETHNIC TIES,

PARTICULARLY WITH THE BLACK (NON-MOORISH) POPULATION OF MAURITANIA. (SENGHOR HAD SAID THAT SENEGAL, WHEN MAURITANIA BECAME INDEPENDENT IN 1960, HAD RELINQUISHED ITS CLAIMS OVER BLACK-INHABITED TERRITORIES NORTH OF THE SENEGAL RIVER. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IF A RADICAL, PRO-POLISARIO GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER IN MAURITANIA, SENEGAL WOULD RESERVE RIGHT TO RE-OPEN ITS TERRITORIAL CLAIMS. IN ADDITION, THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS OF SENEGALESE TROOPS MOVEMENTS TO THE NORTHERN BORDERS. (WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS.)

4. SENGHOR WAS REPORTEDLY PARTICULARLY UPSET WITH NEWS OF MILITARY COUP IN NOUAKCHOTT AND IS SAID TO HAVE PLACED SENEGALESE ARMY ON ALERT AND TO HAVE CONTEMPLATED RECALL OF SENEGALESE BATTALLIONS FROM UNIFIL FORCES IN LEBANON AND INTER-AFRICAN FORCE IN ZAIRE. HOWEVER, FRENCH AMBASSADOR APPARENTLY CALLED ON SENGHOR BEFORE NOON AND PROVIDED CERTAIN INFORMATION CONCERNING COUP AND COUP LEADERS' ORIENTATION IN MAURITANIA WHICH SENGHOR FOUND REASSURING.

5. AT DAY'S END, BY WHICH TIME MORE DETAILED NEWS OF COUP HAD FILTERED THROUGH, INCLUDING COMMITTEE'S PLEDGE TO HONOR ALL MAURITANIA'S FOREIGN AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS, AND TO CONSOLIDATE AND IMPROVE TIES, WITH FRATERNAL AND FRIENDLY COUNTRIES, SENEGALESE APPEARED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE SIMMERED DOWN AND WERE ADOPTING "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE. THIS WAS THE PHRASE USED IN CONVERSATION WHICH DATT HAD WITH SENEGALESE ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL IDRISSE FALL LAST EVENING AND IS ALSO TENOR OF COMMENTS MADE BY OTHER GOS OFFICIALS TO CHARGE AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS. OVERTHROW OF OULD DADDAH IS LEAD HEADLINE IN TODAY'S LE SOLEIL. STORIES ARE STRIGHTFORWARD AND MAINLY BASED ON AFP AND REUTERS DISPATCHES. FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL DESCRIBE IN SOME DETAIL EXTREME ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES IN WHICH MAURITANIA FOUND ITSELF, THE REACTIONS IN NOUAKCHOTT TO RECENT ANTI-CORRUPTION LAWS AND TO ADOPTION OF KORANIC LAW FOR PUNISHING THOSE GUILTY OF CORRUPTION, AND CONCLUDES AS TO FUTURE ORIENTATION OF NEW REGIME THAT MAURITANIA'S NEW MILITARY LEADERSHIP CANNOT AFFORD LUXURY OF LOSING A WAR WHICH IT BLAMES THE CIVILIANS FOR NOT HAVING WON. LE SOLEIL EDITORIAL ALSO PUTS A SPECIAL SENEGALESE SLANT ON EVENTS IN NOUAKCHOTT, REFERRING TO RECENT SACKING OF BLACKS FROM POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE UNDER OULD DADDAH AND GENERAL UNHAPPINESS AND RESENTMENT OF BLACK MINORITY IN MAURITANIA.

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AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DAKAR 5266

6. TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR, ONE OF MOST ASTUTE OBSERVERS  
IN DAKAR, HAD TOLD US THAT WHEN HE PAID FAREWELL CALL  
ON MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH LAST WEEK, HE WAS  
STRUCK BY OULD DADDAH'S DISENCHANTMENT WITH SENGHOR.  
OULD DADDAH REPORTEDLY TOLD TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR THAT HE  
DISAGREED WITH SENGHOR WHO MAINTAINED THAT  
POLISARIO IS PROFOUNDLY RACIST IN ITS ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS.  
UPON REFLECTION, TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR HAD CONCLUDED THAT  
OULD DADDAH FELT THAT HE HAD COME TO THE END OF THE LINE  
MILITARILY WITH POLISARIO, AND WAS ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR  
COMPROMISE AND NEGOTIATIONS, BOTH WITH THE POLISARIO AND  
THE ALGERIANS. TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR THOUGHT THAT IF OULD  
DADDAH HAD BEEN TAKING THIS LINE WITH MAURITANIAN MILITARY, THIS  
MAY HAVE CONSTITUTED AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THEIR DECISION  
TO OVERTHROW OULD DADDAH AT THIS POINT.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
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**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014